



**Our Righteous Father John Cassian, the Confessor  
Whom the Holy Church celebrates on February 29.**

*Note*

*If it is not a leap year, the hymns of Saint John are transferred to the 28th*

This Saint was born about the year 350, and was, according to some, from Roma, according to others from Dacia Pontica (Dobrogea in present-day Romania). He was a learned man who had first served in the military. Later, he forsook this life and became a monk in Bethlehem with his friend and fellow-ascetic, Germanus of Dacia Pontica, whose memory is also celebrated today. Hearing the fame of the great Fathers of Scete, they went to Egypt about the year 390; their meetings with the famous monks of Scete are recorded in Saint John's *Conferences*. In the year 403 they went to Constantinople, where Cassian was ordained deacon by Saint John Chrysostom. Saints Cassian and Germanus went to Rome with letters to Pope Innocent I in defense of the exiled Archbishop of Constantinople. There Saint Cassian was ordained priest, after which he went to Marseilles, where he established the famous monastery of Saint Victor. He reposed in peace in 433.

The last of his writings was *On the Incarnation of the Lord, Against Nestorius*, written in 430 at the request of Leo, the Archdeacon of Pope Celestine. In this work he was the first to show the spiritual kinship between Pelagianism, which taught that Christ was a mere man who without the help of God had avoided sin, and that it was possible for man to overcome sin by his own efforts;

and Nestorianism, which taught that Christ was a mere man used as an instrument by the Son of God, but was not God become man; and indeed, when Nestorius first became Patriarch of Constantinople in 428, he made much of persecuting the heretics, with the exception only of the Pelagians, whom he received into communion and interceded for them to the Emperor and Pope Celestine.

The error opposed to Pelagianism but equally ruinous was Augustine's teaching, that after the fall, man was so corrupt that he could do nothing for his own salvation, and that God simply predestined some men to salvation and others to damnation. Saint John Cassian refuted this blasphemy in the thirteenth of his *Conferences*, with Abbot Chairemon, which eloquently sets forth, at length and with many citations from the Holy Scriptures, the Orthodox teaching of the balance between the grace of God on the one hand, and man's efforts on the other, necessary for our salvation.

Saint Benedict of Nursia, in Chapter 73 of his Rule, ranks Saint Cassian's *Institutes* and *Conferences* first among the writings of the monastic fathers, and commands that they be read in his monasteries; indeed the Rule of Saint Benedict is greatly indebted to the *Institutes* of Saint John Cassian. Saint John Climacus also praises him highly in section 105 of Step 4 of the *Ladder of Divine Ascent*, on Obedience.

*If Alleluia is not said:  
Dismissal Hymn. Plagal of Fourth Tone*

**I**N thee the image was preserved with exactness, O father; for taking up thy cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thy deeds thou didst teach us to overlook the flesh, for it passeth away, but to attend to the soul since it is immortal. Wherefore, O righteous John, thy spirit rejoiceth with the Angels.

*Kontakion. First Tone  
The soldiers standing guard*

**T**HY words breathe forth the sweetness of heavenly cassia, \* dispelling the foul odour of passions and pleasures; \* but with the sweet fragrance of thy discretion and temperance, \* they make known the spiritual ascents in the Spirit, leading men on high, O righteous Father John Cassian, \* divinely-sent guide of monks.

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NOTE

If it be a leap year, this service is chanted on the 29<sup>th</sup>;  
otherwise it is chanted on the 28 in Compline.

VESPERS

*For* Lord, I have cried, *we chant the following Stichera:*

*Second Tone*

**S**INCE thou didst live like an angel upon the earth, O godly-minded and blessed Cassian, thou wast numbered with the choirs of the bodiless hosts. For in taking up the Cross upon thy shoulders, O righteous Father, thou didst follow after the God of all; and slaying the soul-corrupting passions with the labours of abstinence, thou becamest a pure vessel and dwelling-place of the Spirit. Wherefore, we cry unto thee: Do thou pray for all that sing thy praise.

SESSIONAL HYMN

*Fourth Tone. Thou Who wast raised up*

**T**HOU wast devoted to God as one holy; \* and shining brightly with all manner of virtue, \* thou didst flash forth, O Cassian, splendid as the sun, \* ever pouring out the light \* of thy God-given teachings \* in the hearts of all them \* that that with faith show thee honour. \* Now do thou earnestly entreat Christ God \* for those who praise thee with longing and ardent love.

SYNAXARION

On the twenty-ninth of this month we commemorate our righteous Father John Cassian, the Confessor.

*Verses*

Being noetically translated to the divine noetic beings,  
Cassian noetically breatheth forth divine cassia.

On the twenty-ninth magnanimous Cassian died.

On this day we commemorate our Righteous Father Germanus of Dacia Pontica (Dobrogea in Romania), fellow ascetic of Saint John Cassian.

On this day we commemorate our righteous Father Cassian the Recluse of the Kiev Caves.

By their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us. Amen.